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## Chasing models through Melrose, St Andrews and Holyrood

*Omnibus presens scriptum uisuris uel audituris ...* ('To all who shall view or hear the present writing ...'). So opens many a private deed to be found in the Models of Authority database. One half of our project deals with the *uisuri* – those who shall view the writing – in other words what the writing looks like. The other half – which I am working on – deals with the *audituri* – those who shall hear what is written.

Every written act, legal instrument, charter, that we study will have been modelled on some exemplar. We have already heard how this works for what the writing looks like. I'll now take you through a few examples of how our database works for those interested in what the writing sounds like.

My aim by the end of the project is to judge how far the authors of charters show any awareness of each other's forms and formulae, most especially in the way they imitate – or studiously avoid – particular prose features. In other words, I'm chasing models of authority through the archives of Melrose, St Andrews and Holyrood – and eventually through the archives of Durham cathedral priory too.

### *Omnibus hoc scriptum uisuris uel audituris*

So let's begin with the formula that I opened with: *Omnibus hoc scriptum uisuris uel audituris* ('To all who shall view or hear this writing'). By searching for this formula and its variants in the Models of Authority database, the "Barcode" visualisation tool, developed by our colleague, Geoffroy Noël (Department for Digital Humanities, KCL) shows that the phrase appears only in non-royal *acta*. When each result is investigated further, we also find that different models are employed for Episcopal *acta* than for the *acta* of laymen. Episcopal *acta* always begin with the *intitulatio* (the statement of the issuer's name and title), whereas the *acta* of laymen always begin with the address, followed by the *intitulatio*.

### *Omnibus Christi fidelibus*

Staying with the address clause, a search for *Omnibus Christi fidelibus ...* ('To all Christ's faithful people ...') shows us that it is a feature of lay *acta*, and that it does not develop until the thirteenth century. What is more, when we notice the one apparent anomaly in a royal act, by clicking through to the text it immediately shows us that the phrase in question is only being quoted.

### *Totam hanc terram*

Charters emanating from the Melrose abbey archive tend to have long and detailed boundary clauses. What we can also discover is that these boundary clauses are usually followed by a holding clause which begins *Totam hanc terram ...* ('This whole land ...'). This is a feature so far found only in private acts from the Melrose archive. Was it an invention of the Melrose scribes or can we find the model elsewhere?

### *infra*

Equally intriguing is the way that a particular scribe might be able to act as a model. Again related to the boundary clauses of the Melrose archive, there is the case of the scribe – operating in the 1230s – who always spells *infra* as *imfra*, with an **m**. While this is a perfectly common medieval variation, it only occurs in six charters of our corpus so far, and all from Melrose. Any search of an electronic text could show you this; but what 'Models of Authority' shows us is that it is the same scribe in five of the examples – and what is more, his model has influenced the spelling by a different scribe in a cyrograph produced in relation to the properties dealt with in the other five charters.

### *Royal usage influencing private usage*

Finally, can we see any royal models influencing private usage? One route for further investigation is described in results for gifts made in feu and heritage. The results show us that the royal examples are all earlier than the private ones, and that they come from Durham or a Scottish royal centre. The private examples not only occur later, but they all emanate from the Melrose archive – so far.

### *Conclusions*

What I have shown you is the evidence from Melrose, St Andrews, and Holyrood, and how, using the "Barcode" visualisation tool, research questions can be adumbrated and developed; and proposed models can be chased more closely through the archives.

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